

House Resolution

No. 4

**Introduced by Assembly Member Portantino
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Fong, Lieu, Ruskin, and Swanson)**

December 1, 2008

House Resolution No. 4—Relative to federal aid to higher education.

1 WHEREAS, The recent global financial crisis has brought a
2 renewed focus to the task of strengthening our public universities
3 as the key to our country’s long-term economic viability and
4 continued prosperity; and

5 WHEREAS, Although the President and Congress have infused
6 massive amounts of American taxpayers’ dollars in an attempt to
7 stanch the financial bleeding on Wall Street, it is not clear what
8 commitment will be made to rebuild our human infrastructure;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Individuals from all walks of life and of different
11 political persuasions agree that broad access to high-quality higher
12 education is a key ingredient to a positive economic outcome for
13 the American people, and the very survival of a strong United
14 States economy requires a highly educated workforce; and

15 WHEREAS, An affordable, accessible, high-quality education
16 is good not only for an individual’s personal finances, but more
17 importantly, it is essential for our society’s prosperity; and

18 WHEREAS, For years, stakeholders in California’s education
19 community have advocated proper funding for high-quality public
20 higher education that is accessible and affordable for every
21 Californian; and

1 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, due to increasingly dire economic
2 conditions and only modest federal support, we have witnessed
3 the persistent erosion of public resources dedicated to California's
4 higher education segments; and

5 WHEREAS, Declining state and federal support of public higher
6 education has translated into fewer, larger classes available to
7 students', compounding the costs and making students timely
8 progress towards degrees more difficult; and

9 WHEREAS, The budgetary neglect over many years of the
10 University of California, California State University, and California
11 Community Colleges systems now warrants a bold approach by
12 policymakers, just as decisive action has been taken to prevent the
13 collapse of Wall Street; and

14 WHEREAS, During this economic slowdown, the segments of
15 public higher education are grappling with a surge in applications
16 as unemployment continues to rise and the need for workers to
17 retrain and reenter the workforce continues to grow; and

18 WHEREAS, Since 2002, the segments have increased student
19 fees dramatically, with the California State University (CSU) and
20 the University of California (UC) having more than doubled fees;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Coupled with the announcement that, for the first
23 time ever, CSU will be capping admissions and will be potentially
24 turning away 10,000 new students, California is on the verge of
25 breaking the promise of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education
26 of an accessible and affordable education for every student; and

27 WHEREAS, Thousands of students and families who rely on
28 the three segments are California's future entrepreneurs, business
29 owners, peace officers, educators, and public officials—groups that
30 are "too important to fail"; and

31 WHEREAS, Seven hundred billion dollars (\$700,000,000,000),
32 the amount that the federal government has allocated to bail out
33 Wall Street, is more than 10 times the size of the United States
34 Department of Education budget for the 2007 fiscal year, and could
35 be used to send 5,400,000 students to a public university
36 somewhere in the United States this year; now, therefore, be it

37 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
38 Assembly calls upon the Congress and the President of the United
39 States to enact a "New Deal for a New Millenium for Higher
40 Education" that will enable California to rebuild its three segments

1 of public higher education and help the public education systems
2 of the other states as well; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the Assembly calls for a federal program for
4 higher education in the amount of seventy billion dollars
5 (\$70,000,000,000)—just 10 percent of what the United States
6 government is spending on the financial crisis—to rebuild access
7 for students to our nation’s public universities and colleges,
8 including establishing college-going grants similar to the World
9 War II era G.I. Bill of Rights, and student loan debt forgiveness
10 for all students who take jobs in public service; and be it further

11 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
12 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
13 States, and to each Senator and Representative from California in
14 the Congress of the United States.